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ABSTRACT

In January 1995, Illinois' McHenry County College began development of an occupational initiative to prepare individuals for functioning in the "high performance workplace" of today's technological and informational society. The initiative, "Academy for High Performance," was designed to integrate general education with an occupational curriculum and offer a significant work-based experience component. A team was formed of faculty from six divisions, a counselor, and employer representatives to develop an integrated curriculum and delivery method which actively involved students in the learning process. The team developed two major curriculum components: a 2-week orientation and a 14-week integrated learning experience. Features of the components include portfolio development, including a personal journal; an integrative case study based on problem-based learning; team building activities; and problem-solving and critical thinking components. The curriculum plan also incorporates courses addressing personal development, interpersonal skills, and process skills. Suggestions for colleges embarking on similar projects include the following: (1) obtain the full support and backing of the college administration at the highest levels; (2) use teams and team-building activities; (3) use smaller groups to accomplish individual tasks and report back to the larger group; (4) allow enough time to complete the task and avoid premature closure; (5) listen to the employee representatives; and (6) expect institutional changes beyond the immediate activity. Course plans and a schedule for fall 1995 are appended. (TGI)

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High Level Program Integration

at

McHenry County College

Presented at

Workforce 2000 Conference

Orlando, Florida

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Critical Connection: Collegesite/Worksite Learning

Excerpt from an article by Edward S. Beckstrom, Ed.D., Associate Dean, Occupational Education Business Division and June Ungari, Adjunct Instructor, McHenry County College

In January 1995 McHenry County College took its first step in the development of an occupational initiative aimed at preparing individuals for functioning in a "high performance workplace." This initiative, initially called Collegesite/Worksite Learning and recently named the "Academy for High Performance," has been funded through the Illinois State Board of Education. The effort has as its focus the preparation of individuals for work in today's technological/informational society.

In order to be successful in what the college sees as an innovative and creative effort, three elements need to be present:

1. full support and backing of the college administration at the highest levels,
2. commitment from individual faculty willing to be creative and risk change, and
3. a commitment to a vision of quality and high performance

At the outset several factors were "given" which provided an initial framework within which efforts and decisions were made:

1. The "general ed" curriculum was to be integrated with the "occupational" curriculum.
2. The effort would have a significant workbased experience component.
3. The effort would be a team effort with representation from various college and business constituencies.
4. The effort would respect current standards and expectations of occupational programs while incorporating industry based/derived competency expectations.
5. General education requirements would remain consistent with college policy.

Inasmuch as the Office Systems Technology Program was most developed of the high school Tech/Prep initiatives and the fact that the college had a current Advanced Placement effort in that program, it was selected to be the first program to be addressed under the Collegesite/Worksite Learning initiative. The Academy for High Performance was created when a second program, Manufacturing Technology, was identified as a target program for this eduction-to-career effort. The efforts in the Manufacturing Technology Program began in earnest Fall 1996 and are in the initial stages of development, drawing, in part, upon the experiences of the Office Systems Technology effort. For the purposes of this paper, the focus will be on the efforts to date in Office Systems Technology.

In order to establish a team for this effort, faculty were identified from the following areas to become members: Office Systems Technology, Computer Information Systems, Communications, Humanities, Math/Science, and Social Science. The team created (hereafter known as the "cell"), also included a college counselor and employer representatives.

The challenges facing the cell at the outset were twofold: team building and education. Teambuilding inasmuch as the anticipated efforts were to be a team effort. Individuals involved came from various discipline groups as well as business and industry, bringing to the cell different values, needs, and perceptions. It was critical that the efforts being made by the cell modeled and reflected the team concept so critical in today's high performance workplace. Education was needed inasmuch as education-to-career efforts were new to many of the individuals involved. Both philosophical assumptions underpinning and pragmatic reasons for such an effort needed to be understood and accepted. There had to be agreement on the initial framework factors listed above.

The cell concerned itself, in the planning portion of the grant, with developing an integrated curriculum and a method of delivery that fosters that integration. The curriculum needed to reflect a desire to actively involve the students in the learning process. A major intent of the overall effort has been the development of workplace skills as identified through a DACUM and personal research done by team members. Using the OST AAS degree curriculum as an initial framework, the cell developed a plan whereby integration would be achieved through modularizing the curriculum, having students use a portfolio and do journaling, and providing an integrative, problem-based "case study" to be used

throughout the curriculum. In addition, team building activities and problem-solving/critical thinking components were built in.

Initially, the cell focused most intently on the first semester activities that subsequently began in August 1995. Future semesters are currently being planned. It is the cell's intention to rely more and more on student input into the development of upcoming curricula.

Initial workplace experiences are planned to begin Spring 1996 with increasing worksite learning experiences until the last semester when the bulk of a student's experiences with the effort will be at the worksite. Coordination and administration of these worksite experiences is being done in cooperation with a private third-party entity: NetCor Inc., who recruits interested business partners and provides the vehicle for placement of students in the worksite.

The cell team determined early in its deliberations that with the short planning period to work with (January– August 1995), some compromise with the desired intent of having a "fully integrated curriculum" was in order. Given current institutional, funding, and state credit-granting policy requirements, the decision was made by the cell to require any curriculum offered in the CS/WS effort to be *at least* "worth" one credit-hour. In order to create some flexibility in integration, some three credit-hour courses have been "modularized" into three one credit-hour courses that, when combined, encompass the full content of the three credit-hour course. In addition to "academic" and "occupational" courses included in the curriculum for this first semester, courses that address personal development, interpersonal skills, and process skills are incorporated. The courses *Career Search*, *Career Satisfaction and Success*, and *Personal Development* are such courses.

The courses included in this first semester and the corresponding credit-hour and contact-hour values are as follows:

BUS 155	Business English and Communications	3 cr.	45 contact
CIS 110	Computer Literacy	2 cr.	32 contact
IDS 110	Career Search	1 cr.	15 contact
IDS 112	Career Satisfaction and Success	1 cr.	15 contact
IND 160	Independent Studies in Humanities*	1 cr.	15 contact
IND 170	Mathematical Concepts (Math modularized)	1 cr.	15 contact
OST 122	Word Processing II	2 cr.	32 contact
OST 125	Word Processing Applications	2 cr.	32 contact
PDV 110	Personal Career Development	1 cr.	15 contact
SPE 147	(Communications modularized)	1 cr.	15 contact

*The course IND 160 is offered as the first component of a modularized humanities course currently being developed for inclusion in the college's curricular offerings.

All modularized courses represent one-third of the content necessary to meet the General Education requirements in their respective areas. All of the modularized gen-ed courses when completed in blocks of three, meet state guidelines for transferability.

The CS/WS cell team developed two major components to the first semester: a 2-week Orientation and a 14-week integrated learning experience. As mentioned above, integrative features designed into the curriculum and efforts are portfolio development, including a personal journal; an integrative case study based on problem-based learning; team building activities; and problem-solving/critical thinking components. The attached schematic represents the curricular activities of the first semester and sequence of courses for this demonstration project. Please note that Thursday mornings are designated as cell team meetings when team members meet to discuss and coordinate efforts for the current semester and plan activities for future semesters.

This effort has been and continues to be an evolving, dynamic process. Creating a new paradigm while trying to work within existing paradigms has been a challenge. Some things have worked well, others we have struggled with. For any college attempting to embark on a similar project, here are a few suggestions:

1. Ensure the commitment from the highest level of the administration.
2. Form a team of volunteers *and* free them to participate.
3. Spend time and energy on team building activities.
4. Form smaller groups (subgroups) to accomplish individual tasks and develop potential plans to be presented to the larger team for discussion and decisions.
5. Resist temptation to let a natural leader force the group in an individual direction.
6. Trust the process.
7. Spend enough time. Avoid premature closure.
8. Include all disciplines.

9. Listen to your employee representatives.

10. Visit worksites. Reconfirm competency requirements.

11. Be willing to redefine success measurements. Numbers should not be the measure; the process changes the participants and this change is what enables creativity.

12. Expect institutional changes beyond the immediate activity.

13. Be flexible and willing to challenge current assumptions on education and learning.

This process started with a vision and is being held together by the combined visions of people involved. Its success is a result of the commitment and energies of the individuals who see things as they might become and are willing to take some risks to get there.

GENERAL EDUCATION	SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2	SEMESTER 3	SEMESTER 4
Communicating (6)	Speech (1)	Speech(1)ENG(1)	Speech(1)ENG(1)	ENG (1)
Humanities (3)	Hum (1)	Hum (1)	Hum (1)	-
Natural Science (3)	Math (1)	-	Math (1)	Math (1)
Social Science (3)	-	Soc Sci (1)	Soc Sci (1)	Soc Sci (1)
15 Credits	3	4	5	3
BUSINESS CORE				
ACC 110 (3) (2/2)	-	ACC 110 (1)	ACC 110 (1)	ACC 110 (1)
BUS 145 (3)	-	BUS 145 (1)	BUS 145 (1)	BUS 145 (1)
BUS 150 (3)	-	BUS 150 (1)	BUS 150 (1)	BUS 150 (1)
CIS 110 (2) (2/2)	CIS 110 (2)	-	-	-
MGT 205 (3)	-	-	-	MGT 205 (3)
IDS 110 (1)	105 110 (1)	-	-	-
IDS 115 (1)	105 115 (1)	-	-	-
16 Credits	4	3	3	6
OST CORE				
BUS 155 (3)	BUS 155 (3)	-	-	-
OST 102 (3)	-	OST 102 (3)	-	-
OST 105 (1)	-	OST 105 (1)	-	-
OST 125 (2)	OST 125 (2)	-	-	-
OST 122 (2)	OST 122 (2)	-	-	-
OST 145 (3)		OST 145 (3)	-	-
OST 201 (3)			OST 201 (3)	-
OST 250 (3)				OST 250 (3)
20 Credits	7	7	3	3
ELECTIVES				
PDV 110 (1)	PDV 110 (1)			
TBA Course (3)	-		Course (3)	
TBA Course (3)	-			Course (3)
TBA Course (2)	-		Course (2)	
TBA Course (3)	-	Course (3)		
12 Credits	1	3	3	3
Total Credits: 63	**15**	**17**	**16**	**15**

Collegesite/Worksite Office Systems Technology

FALL 1995

	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
WEEK 1	Welcome Learning Styles Case Methodology & Problem-based Learning (12-5)	Teambuilding Interpersonal Communication (12-4) Portfolio (4-5)	Study Skills (12-4) Journaling (4-5)
WEEK 2	Problem Solving Critical Thinking Ethics (12-5)	Math (12-3) Communications (3-5)	Communications (12-2) Social Science (2-5)

CS/WS OST
COURSE SCHEDULE
FALL 1995

	WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
TUESDAY	12 - 1	ORIENTATION	ORIENTATION	CIS 110	▶	▶	▶	▶	▶	▶		PDV	IDS	IND 170		MAT	▶
	1 - 2			CIS 110	▶	▶	▶	▶	▶	▶		PDV	IDS	IND 170		MAT	▶
	2 - 3			SPE 147	▶	▶	▶	BUS 155		▶		PDV	IDS	BUS 155		▶	▶
	3 - 4			SPE 147	▶	▶	▶	BUS 155		▶		PDV	IDS	BUS 155		▶	▶
	4 - 5			SPE 147	▶	IDS	▶	BUS 155		▶		PDV	IDS	BUS 155		▶	▶
WEDNESDAY	12 - 1			OST 125	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊	122	PDV	OST 122		▶		▶	▶
	1 - 2			OST 125	◊	◊	◊	◊	◊	122	PDV	OST 122		▶		▶	▶
	2 - 3			OST 125	◊	◊	◊	◊	122	122	PDV	OST 122		▶		▶	▶
	3 - 4			OST 125	◊	◊	◊	◊	122	122	PDV	OST 122		▶		▶	▶
	4 - 5	ORIENTATION	ORIENTATION	OST 125	◊	◊	◊	◊	122	PDV	PDV	OST 122		▶		▶	▶
THURSDAY	12 - 1			CIS 110	▶	▶	▶	▶	▶	▶		IDS	IDS	IND 170		MAT	▶
	1 - 2			CIS 110	▶	▶	▶	▶	▶	▶		IDS	IDS	BUS 155		▶	▶
	2 - 3			IND 160	HUM	▶	▶	BUS 155		▶		IDS	IDS	BUS 155		▶	▶
	3 - 4			IND 160	HUM	▶	▶	BUS 155		▶		IDS	IDS	BUS 155		▶	▶
	4 - 5			IDS	▶	▶	▶	▶	BUS 155	▶		IDS	IDS	BUS 155		▶	▶

BUS 155	Business English & Communications	3 Credits	IND 170	Math Module	1 Credit
CIS 100	Competency Literacy *	2 Credits	OST 122	Word Processing II	2 Credits
IDS 110	Career Search	1 Credit	OST 125	Word Processing Application	2 Credits
IDS 112	Career Success and Satisfaction	1 Credit	PDV 110	Personal Career Development II	1 Credit
IND 160	Humanities Module	1 Credits	SPE 147	Speech	1 Credit

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